

**From:** [Scott Couch](#)  
**To:** [Chang, Ko Ching; Billington, Tracie;](#)  
**CC:**  
**Subject:** K.White comment: Monte Rio  
**Date:** Friday, December 15, 2006 9:55:18 AM  
**Attachments:**

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Scott B. Couch, P.G.  
State Water Board - Div. of Financial Assistance  
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>>> Ken White [REDACTED] 12/7/2006 10:49 PM >>>  
Dear Mr. Couch,

The Monte Rio sewer project is a clear matter of "bait and switch" for the intended Monte Rio rate-payers.

From it's convoluted beginnings a few years ago till today the projected cost for the sewer has more than doubled from \$8MIL to \$16.9MIL, but when the tender goes out for bids it's no stretch to presume that the price tag will go up even more, probably well beyond \$16.9MIL. The upward price spiral for this county boon-doggie is out of control. And no one is dealing with this out-of-control price spiral in official circles. There are no calm official heads in county offices pulling their hair out over costs. Taxpayers and future sewer rate payers for this overpriced monstrosity of a sewer should be afforded another Proposition 218 vote to decide if they really want a gold plated system or not...

Also, the original reason for the sewer project was that certain septic systems were polluting the Russian River at Monte Rio. This premise was never fully developed for the public to understand. To ascertain if those who are against funding this misguided project are credible or not, ask the county to provide you with clear evidence that there really is septic system pollution entering the river. Ask for

specifics: dates of tests, places, addresses of the polluting septic and so on. I think you'll find there is no basis whatsoever for the sewer project and the cost projection for such a sewer is already coming in at \$16.9MIL? What is wrong with this picture? And all sorts of government agencies are actually going to fund this thing?

This sewer project has been blatantly manipulated by County of Sonoma officials to gain ever more county revenues and to make a push for growth in an historically significant, magnificent, fragile and narrow river valley! But the lower Russian River valley can't take on much growth. This natural treasure would be destroyed, ultimately lost to all. Just a few dozen more homes in this valley would crush our river's ecosystem with all the excavation, natural surface tinkering, pipe laying and paving over of open ground by building homes on fragile hillsides or close to the river and so on. And if unrelated proposed new laws that would prohibit the building of any structure from between 100 to 200 feet from streams and rivers is passed, then how can it be that the county will be building a significant sewer plant within 100 feet of the Russian River's riparian corridor? Where in the world is the EPA on this travesty? Where is common sense?

And look at the numbers! Think about this just for a minute. The county is aiming to develop a sewer that if built will cost (as of now) \$16.9MIL to hook up some 400 lots. This initial tranche represents \$42,250 for each hook up! Check your sources and I think you will find that this particular sewer project's cost per hookup is surely greater than the historical cost to hook up a home in Beverly Hills! Does this mean something is out of kilter? Of course it does. In spades.

There is also the question of a bridge: the Monte Rio Bridge is being slated to carry one maybe two sewer system pipelines. Various and sundry engineering authorities have determined that the Monte Rio bridge needs to be retrofitted, for safety reasons, to protect it from a certain level of earthquake. The retrofit is being projected for the midterm, or maybe even sooner. This is a common procedure for old bridges throughout the state. We all know this.

So, the question has to be: Is everyone going to blithely stand by and allow possibly two sewer lines to cross such a aged bridge in historic and beautiful Sonoma County? Have our officials gone brain dead on this matter?

Now, Mr. Couch, do you really want to pour an additional \$3.5MIL of your agency's taxpayer's dollars into this "witches brew" of bureaucratic tomfoolery? I surely hope not.

Please put me on record as being against any Prop 50/IRWM funding for the Monte Rio Sewer Project.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

/S/

Kenneth R. White

